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New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1)

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As is his custom every year, the Secretary-General made it a point to include in his report on the work of the Organization his vision of the most important issues and problems facing the United Nations and the international community. I would like to pay tribute to the comprehensive nature of the report and to seize this opportunity to refer to several points that were raised in the report.

The Secretary-General has devoted a large part of this report to the situation in Africa. We welcome the increasing concern about Africa within the United Nations and its main bodies and agencies. We believe, however, that the gap remains very large between what the international community intends and pledges to do in order to prevent and settle the conflicts on the African continent, and the actual steps taken in assuming the collective responsibility to maintain international peace and security in Africa and to deal with the actual root causes of those conflicts, which have wreaked havoc on the political, economic and social infrastructures in that continent.

Concerning the Horn of Africa, Egypt looks forward to the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) so that a necessary political climate for confidence-building can be created between those two sister countries and the way paved to a peace agreement between them.

Egypt looks forward to renewed impetus on the part of the international community to promote efforts to establish peace in Somalia, particularly since we are now at a decisive phase that requires all the efforts of the international community.

As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we hope that all the parties will create the necessary conditions for moving to the second phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and allow further progress towards the solution of this crisis.

The Egyptian delegation believes that the response of the United Nations to the present crisis in Sierra Leone will reflect the commitment of the international community to its responsibilities in Africa and will certainly affect directly the future role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security on the African continent. That is why we look forward to seeing the Organization expand the military component of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and to seeing the international community respect the embargo on illicit trafficking in diamonds, while contributing generously towards the efforts to reconstruct Sierra Leone and its national armed forces.

Concerning United Nations peacekeeping operations, the recommendations contained in the

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report of the Panel of experts set up by the Secretary-General to study those operations, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, form an important and natural part of the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization this year. Egypt is fully aware of the importance of those recommendations and of their long-term effects on the performance of the international Organization in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. We look forward to detailed discussions on the recommendations in the relevant committees of the General Assembly with other Member States in order to reach a consensus on the best approach to take.

In this respect, I should like to point out that the Member States contributing to the peacekeeping operations — and Egypt is one of them — should consider the reform of that particular area of the work of the United Nations as very important. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations should be effective from the point of view of timing, deployment and operational efficiency. We would prefer, if possible, that the United Nations carry out peacekeeping operations rather than arrangements that are not relevant to it. The United Nations continues to be the only legitimate international forum, accepted by all, for peoples to work through.

I should like to refer to the statement made by the Secretary-General concerning the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world, and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. The figures contained in the report and in reports of other United Nations agencies indicate that there is a very serious social dimension to the spread of that disease. I refer not only to the frightening rate at which it is spreading — it affects 25 per cent of the population in some States of the continent — but also to the fact that it is affecting people of middle age, which will have an impact on the future of society and threatens the development of the continent. That is why Egypt is particularly interested in convening a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the problem of AIDS in all its aspects. Our delegation participated effectively in the deliberations that preceded the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 54/283 concerning the convening of that special session, and made it a point also to become one of the co-sponsors of the resolution.

For that reason, Egypt calls on all delegations and States to display a spirit of cooperation for holding that special session as soon as possible in order to examine ways and means of pooling international resources to tackle that very serious disease.

As for the sanctions, we welcome the proposals submitted by the Secretary-General in his report, because they parallel what my delegation and others have repeatedly affirmed. We would like to stress the importance of assessing the effectiveness of those sanctions in order to discern whether they truly promote the purposes and principles of the United Nations and to take stock of their impact on targeted States at the regional and national levels.

We have often stressed the fact that sanctions should be an exceptional measure and a last resort, in conformity with Chapter VII of the Charter, and should be imposed only after all other means of peacefully settling conflicts have been exhausted, in accordance with Chapter VI. We stress also the fact that sanctions should be imposed in accordance with objective, open, fixed and agreed criteria and for a given period of time, so that they do not become eternal shackles.

We have often called attention to the negative side effects of sanctions applied under Chapter VII — be they on the people of the targeted State, or on third parties whose interests are closely linked to those of the State in question, particularly neighbouring countries. In this regard, we were very interested in what the Secretary-General said in his report about the need to re-examine the concept of sanctions, and we continue to call for the lifting of sanctions and for the application of the relevant Articles of the Charter, in particular Article 50.

We congratulate you, Sir, and your friendly country on your election to preside over this session. We are confident that your well-known expertise and capabilities will enhance and ensure its success. I again assure you of our delegation's cooperation to ensure the success of the session.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for presenting us with his annual report on the work of the Organization.

The debate on what the international community should collectively do to address the concerns and issues before us comes at an opportune time, when our heads of State and Government have just concluded their Summit. We should now give effect to the

commitments they made in their Declaration. We should begin with our Organization itself.

There are two important elements in any reform of the United Nations: first, the restoration of the primacy of the General Assembly in United Nations affairs; and, secondly, making the Security Council more representative of the United Nations membership and more transparent in its working methods.

The General Assembly is, and should remain, the principal body in the United Nations for deliberation on issues of international concern. It is where the sovereign equality of nations finds full expression.

The reform of the United Nations would not be concluded without an effective reform of the Security Council. Its membership must reflect the increase both in numbers and diversity of the membership of the United Nations. Even more important, the Council's decision-making process must reflect the principle of the sovereign equality of all States, which is the cornerstone of the United Nations. While the Open-ended Working Group has made tremendous efforts to achieve Security Council reform, it must complete its work soon.

The United Nations must be given all the resources required to enhance its effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security. Emphasis should be placed on conflict prevention. At a time when United Nations resources are stretched to the limits, preventive diplomacy presents a more cost-effective option than peacekeeping, which some estimate would require $3 billion to $4 billion a year to maintain in the coming years. But for as long as conflicts continue to erupt the United Nations should strengthen its peacekeeping capacity. The Philippines will remain fully engaged in United Nations peacekeeping missions to the extent that its resources allow.

The United Nations should seriously consider the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel and support its constructive suggestions, which would improve United Nations peace operations. The United Nations must ensure that United Nations peace operations are adequately financed and supported by Member States.

The Philippines is concerned about the adverse impact of sanctions on innocent civilian populations. The United Nations should help eliminate these negative effects and call for periodic and regular reviews of existing sanction regimes. The Security Council should only impose sanctions that are "targeted" and "smart", so as to spare innocent civilian populations from unnecessary suffering.

The United Nations should continue to promote democracy and the rule of law in all the countries of the world. It should be committed to the consolidation of representative democracy as a system of government for all. Political pluralism balanced by good governance and the ethical discharge of public duties must form part of the United Nations core values. Democracy, the rule of law and the effective participation of citizens in all the nations of the world must be a rallying point for all the Members of the United Nations.

The United Nations should be relentless in the promotion of human rights around the world. The principle must be upheld that Governments should, first and foremost, safeguard and protect the fundamental rights of their citizens. Only an unwavering commitment by all to the promotion of human rights will prevent a recurrence of the humanitarian catastrophes witnessed in the last decade.

The United Nations Charter principles on the sovereign equality of all its Members and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another should continue to be upheld. Any armed intervention, no matter how justifiable, must be carried out only with the authority of the Security Council if a modicum of international order is to be maintained.

The General Assembly should make a concerted effort to respond to, if not totally eliminate, the menace of HIV/AIDS. The response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic requires cooperation, not competition, by all the relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental bodies. It demands collective action by all.

The United Nations should make special efforts to address the critical problems of the African continent. A higher proportion of the populations of sub-Saharan Africa are affected by poverty than in any other region of the world. Africa is also affected by a high incidence of HIV/AIDS. These combined hardships are ravaging the region in a manner not seen anywhere else. Therefore, specific measures for debt cancellation, increased official development assistance, increased flows of foreign direct investment and

improved market access should be established specifically for Africa.

My delegation will continue to participate in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court. We view the discussions on the crime of aggression as having particular importance.

The Philippines supports the goal of preventing impunity and bringing perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity to the bar of justice. But we will continue to evaluate whether the Court would be an effective tool to achieve the goals set for it. My delegation will also look closely at how the Court will be financed. And we will continue our study of the critical issue of the Court's jurisdiction.

I join others in recognizing the success of the recently concluded year 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We welcome the outcome of this review, particularly the reaffirmation by the five permanent members of the Security Council of their nuclear disarmament obligations. However, we express our hopes for the early and meaningful implementation of these obligations.

While there are several established multilateral venues that deal with various aspects of the nuclear issue, it may be time to deal with it in a comprehensive and focused manner. I urge all of us to take charge of preserving our future and to support the proposal of the Secretary-General, contained in his millennium report, that consideration be given to convening a major international conference that would help identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

We support the proposal to hold an international conference in 2001 to address the issue of small arms proliferation. Excess weapons must be destroyed where they are found. Their easy movement must be curtailed. National arsenals should have only the weapons they need for legitimate self-defence.

At the same time, we should continue to strengthen the regime established by the landmine Convention. Even before its conclusion the Philippines, fully aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of anti-personnel landmines, had already abandoned the use of these weapons. We call on all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention. The Philippines also supports all efforts at landmine clearance and victim rehabilitation.

We must ensure the success of the forthcoming Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries by convening an additional meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee. We owe it to our brothers in Africa, in landlocked developing countries, in nations particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, in small island developing States and in my own region of Asia to dedicate ourselves to focus the world's interest on least developed countries.

We must also ensure the success of the High-Level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development. We must pay particular attention so that all stakeholders in the process develop a strong sense of ownership and together we can make the international financial system development-oriented and responsive to the needs of the majority of humanity.

We also cannot allow globalization to continue without giving developing countries a chance to catch up. We must not only bring about a more humane economic system, but must find means to bridge the digital divide that now separates the rich from the poor.

It must be stressed that for effective humanitarian assistance to continue the political will to provide the necessary resources, including financial resources, must be present. Moreover, protection of humanitarian relief workers must be assured. We pay tribute to the many men and women who have lost their lives, and those who, in spite of serious danger, are willing to sacrifice theirs to bring relief and assistance to unfortunate fellow men.

The declarations and further actions agreed upon at the special sessions to review progress in the commitments made in Beijing and Copenhagen to empower women and achieve social development, respectively, are testimony to the firm determination of the international community to achieve social development and improve the status of women. What is essential now is to put these commitments into action so that the goals set in Copenhagen and Beijing may be achieved.

The Philippines welcomes the attention given in the Secretary-General's report to the problem of trafficking in human beings, particularly women and

girls, as a priority area that must be addressed. In a related sense, the Philippines will be introducing an updated draft resolution that will incorporate commitments made in the special session of the Beijing +5 review.

Finally, as we can see, there is much to be done. I am confident that together we will succeed.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like first to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for submitting the report on the work of the Organization to the Assembly at the current session. It provides us with comparatively detailed information on the activities of the United Nations relating to international peace and security, development, human rights and other fields during the period under review. On the basis of the report, I would like to present the following views.

On the threshold of the new century, the first and foremost task facing the United Nations is to establish just international relations based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty of Member States and non-interference in others' internal affairs.

The new concept of "humanitarian intervention" which emerged soon after the strike on Yugoslavia last year gives rise to serious concern among many countries as a grave challenge to the supreme principle of respect for sovereignty that should be observed in international relations. This concept of "humanitarian intervention" is based on the notion that power is almighty and therefore, if this is allowed, it will convert present relations into ones in which the strong wield their power against the weak.

In countries whose sovereignty is being encroached upon, a large number of people are forced to live an insecure and miserable life, deprived of the fundamental right to survival, and the situation in neighbouring regions remains unstable. This indicates that if a State's sovereignty is infringed upon, no country can safeguard the dignity of its nation or achieve economic and social development; furthermore, international peace and security will be endangered. There will be no justification whatsoever for so-called "humanitarian intervention" that infringes upon sovereignty.

Like big developed countries, the developing countries also highly value their sovereignty. Respect for a State's sovereignty constitutes a cornerstone of international relations. In this regard, my delegation positively notes that the principles of respect for sovereign equality, non-interference in others' internal affairs and political independence have been reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit. We hold that these principles should be observed in international relations of the new century and future activities of the United Nations.

Another important task facing the United Nations in the new century is to take practical measures to enable countries to benefit equally from globalization. There has been a series of discussions on challenges to globalization in the international arena — most recently, during the Millennium Summit and the general debate. However, we have not yet achieved a common understanding of the concept of globalization. As a result, countries have divergent views and arguments on globalization.

It can be said that several years have passed since the globalization process seemed to start. Nevertheless, only a few countries, particularly the developed countries, are benefiting from it, while the overall economic and social situation of the developing countries is further deteriorating. The reality shows that the globalization process, based on the international economic relations favourable only for the developed countries, is aggravating poverty in the developing countries and widening disparities between the rich and the poor countries.

This is the conclusion we can draw from the globalization process so far, as we enter the twenty-first century. In order to make globalization really benefit all countries, new international economic relations favourable for both the developed and the developing countries should be established, through practical measures conducive to the economic development of the developing countries, such as reforming the loan policies of international financial institutions and introducing equitable international trade regimes. Their realization requires political will on the part of the developed countries.

For the United Nations to carry out those tasks, its functions and role should be decisively enhanced. What is important here is to enable the General Assembly, the major deliberative organ of the United Nations, to play a central role in considering and deciding on all matters that are brought to its attention. As we are well aware, the General Assembly is the

most representative, democratic and authoritative organ of the United Nations, and it has the mandates to discuss any issues, ranging from international peace and security to economic and social development and so forth. That notwithstanding, at present the General Assembly is not able to carry out its mandate under the Charter and continues to be marginalized in the decision-making process. This means that, in the United Nations, crucial issues are being decided upon in other organs with limited membership. In order to address that negative practice, the General Assembly's role should be enhanced to enable it to discuss important issues relating to international peace and security. In particular, a system should be established which empowers the General Assembly to approve resolutions of the Security Council relating to the use of force or to the imposition of sanctions. Security Council resolutions are adopted on behalf of the entire United Nations membership. It is therefore natural that the General Assembly, representing all countries, should exercise such a power.

It is also equally important to ensure that United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social development be fully implemented. Until now, we have not seen the full implementation of various resolutions calling for the democratization of the decision-making process of international financial institutions, the expansion of development assistance and the alleviation of the debt burden with a view to actively assisting the efforts of developing countries towards economic and social development. Consequently, the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development have not produced the proper results, and the expectations placed in the United Nations are diminishing. In that regard, we take particular note of the fact that the central role of the General Assembly as the key deliberative and policy-making organ of the United Nations was reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration, and we look forward to practical measures being taken to that end.

My delegation believes that those views should be fully taken into account in future United Nations activities, and we assure the Assembly that we will make an active effort to ensure the success of the present session.

Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): As expected, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1) is informative and focused, and — which in our view is more important — contains many comments, suggestions and proposals. It gives us a good picture of the work of the Organization and of its priorities for the upcoming period. We have studied the report in parallel with the Secretary-General's millennium report (A/54/2000), entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". The period that both reports review was and continues to be the most challenging of times for the Secretary-General and for the Organization. The main message of the reports is that, in spite of everything, the Organization remains indispensable, and that its organs have functioned satisfactorily.

The United Nations continues to influence global development and the global agenda. Its busiest bodies have been the Security Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Of course, the United Nations could have done more. We hope that the positive outcome of the Millennium Summit and of the present Millennium Assembly will stimulate the Organization to do more in the future in that direction — in accordance, of course, with the Charter.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments on some of the issues dealt with in the Secretary-General's report. In the twenty-first century, the United Nations must become a more relevant organization than it was in the second half of the twentieth century. The principles of the Charter must be observed and respected by all States. International law must be respected also. Globalization should be managed, and the best — the only — place to agree on its management is the United Nations. The basis for that management should be the equality of nations and mutual respect among States, which can be achieved only through cooperation and integration, not through confrontation, the use of force or domination.

We have already left the period of confrontation behind us. The Organization should remain truly universal and of equal importance for all nations, large and small. We should resist most strongly the marginalization of the Organization, and we should uphold the position that only the United Nations can promote global integration for the benefit of all. Relations and cooperation among Member States, large and small, should be based on the principle of good-neighbourliness. Everybody should benefit from this cooperation. The number-one goal of humanity is to

eliminate poverty and injustice. That would prevent the eruption of world conflict.

To achieve all of that, and much more, we must have a United Nations that is relevant for this century. The Millennium Summit showed that this is possible. A careful study of the Secretary-General's report makes clear the same message. If that is correct, then the principal organs of the Organization should be reformed, and the present hesitation in that respect should be overcome. The Organization could be an effective engine of change and a leader in improved international relations and increased cooperation if it continues to reform itself, particularly its mechanisms and its principal organs: the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

For some time, many delegations, including mine, have been concerned with the need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, not at the expense of the other principal organs but on the basis of the provisions of the Charter. It is fair to say that the potential of the General Assembly is not being fully utilized. In essence, the Assembly works for only one and a half months a year. Because of that, a routine prevails in its work; if this continues, as is the case at present, the Assembly will further marginalize itself. Hence, in our view, a new arrangement for the work of the General Assembly is a necessity. The commitment undertaken by heads of State or Government at the Millennium Summit is of paramount importance in that respect and should be implemented. The heads of State or Government resolved

> "To reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively". (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

To realize that solemn commitment, we need a new arrangement for the work of the General Assembly. The Assembly cannot discharge its duty as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ under the present arrangement, with its one-and-a-half-month working schedule.

The time has come for the General Assembly to start functioning all year round, in the same way as national parliaments are functioning. If that happens, many sub-organs of the principal organs will become redundant. That will be of great importance for the participation in the work of the United Nations of the majority of Member States, which cannot afford huge missions in New York and cannot effectively participate in so many sub-organs and ad hoc working bodies.

The Secretary-General emphasizes in this year's report, as he did in last year's report, the importance and the usefulness of prevention. We could not agree more with him. The Republic of Macedonia has had a very positive experience with prevention. It was the host of the first United Nations preventive peacekeeping force, a very successful undertaking of the United Nations. The Security Council did not establish a similar preventive peacekeeping force in other regions, in spite of the obvious necessity. This issue must be thoroughly examined when we review the Brahimi Panel report and when we consider the report of the Security Council. It must be clear at the beginning of this discussion that the establishment of United Nations preventive peacekeeping missions should be the main preoccupation of the Security Council and be part of the new arrangement for peacekeeping forces. The reputation of our Organization will be negatively affected if the Security Council continues to take action only after the eruption of war conflicts and continues to act like a fire brigade.

In the Secretary-General's report (A/55/1) substantial space is devoted to our Organization's humanitarian action and rightfully so. It is possible that in the future we will be faced with the need for even larger-scale humanitarian actions, owing to natural disasters, war or civil conflicts. Some are concerned that humanitarian efforts could be abused for political aims, or that the principle of sovereignty could be disregarded, or that humanitarian action could be undertaken that was contrary to the principles of the Charter. In our view, there is a need to clarify our Organization's position on this subject. We should not have problems when there is a necessity to help people in need and we should not hesitate to take the necessary humanitarian action. Respect for human rights and our obligation to help people in need should have no boundaries.

The region of my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is the Balkans or South-Eastern Europe, and it is mentioned in various chapters of the Secretary-General's report. It is true that it is a region burdened with many difficulties, owing mainly to the wars in parts of the former Yugoslavia, as well as to the situation in Kosovo. But taking everything into

account, we can state that the general situation in the region is improving. The main generator of that improvement is the "Europeanization" of the region and efforts for the region to become integrated into the Euro-structure as fully and as soon as possible. Of particular importance is the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and, of course, the success of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We are optimistic about the future of our region, but in order to reach a satisfactory situation, the involvement and the assistance of the international community is a necessity.

At this point I would like to end my statement by thanking the Secretary-General for providing us with such a useful and stimulating report, wishing him successes in the upcoming period. The Republic of Macedonia will continue its excellent cooperation with the Secretary-General and will not hesitate to give him its full support in his endeavours.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Since I am speaking in the plenary for the first time, let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to steer the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. With your consummate diplomatic skills and leadership, you are sure to guide the General Assembly successfully.

Human beings have traversed many millennia in their journey. No doubt, the change of a century and a millennium is significant; but we are cognizant that it is incidental to the calendars — which are many — that our societies observe. Yet, we must seize every opportunity that comes our way likely to be of service to our common humanity. Nepal is happy that the United Nations did so by organizing the Millennium Summit, which has, presumably, opened a new chapter in the history of both human beings and the United Nations.

It was a cause for exuberance that 147 heads of State and Government met at the Summit and mulled over ways for a better world for everyone. We now have the challenge to translate the vision of the Summit Declaration into concrete programmes and strategies to meet the goals the Summit has set for us. We are soberly reminded that, in the past, the pledges we all have made have remained unfulfilled. If we were to be serious this time, and Nepal hopes we all are, this Assembly is the point whence the process of implementing that vision in all earnestness must start.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As world leaders agreed at the Summit, we need a stronger and better-equipped United Nations playing a pivotal role in global affairs as the most representative and universal body to achieve shared goals in an increasingly multi-polar world; for we all — large and small, rich and poor — need the United Nations. We also try to contribute to improving the work of the Organization in our own ways and within our capacities. We feel pain when the Organization fails and rejoice when it succeeds. It is for that reason that the appreciation of the Organization's performance must be viewed in this perspective.

Let me now pay heartfelt tribute to Secretary-General Annan for trying through his untiring efforts to promote peace, stimulate development, foster the rule of law and strengthen the Organization. Under his leadership, the United Nations has become a forward-looking organization willing to take proactive steps and to reach out as necessary. The Secretary-General's annual report, entitled "Common Destiny, New Resolve", presents eloquently both what the Organization has been able to accomplish in the course of the past year and what still needs to be done to improve our common destiny through new resolve. In taking stock of the period under review, we find that the United Nations has had a mixed bag of successes and failures. Just as we celebrate its successes, we must also reflect on its failures.

The Organization's involvement in East Timor has meant the dawning of new hope for people there. People in Kosovo are building new lives and picking up the pieces of their shattered past. Many other trouble-stricken places also see the beacon that the Organization's engagement brings them. Today, 45,000 blue helmets and 13,000 civilian staff are busy keeping the peace and bringing succour to people's lives, more than at any other time in the post-cold-war era. However, much remains to be done to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The world has not become more peaceful, nor has it made progress in spreading to everyone around the world the benefits of globalization and the information revolution. Countries in Africa, Asia, Latin American and Europe are embroiled in unfortunate conflicts that

are now more internal in nature than inter-State in character. The arms race is moving at full-steam in many regions, thereby sapping States of the strength and resources that could otherwise be used to make a difference in their peoples' lives.

Globalization has unleashed opportunities for growth for some, and has brought burdens to others; more riches for some and more war for others. Globalization has not only created markets for the goods, services, capital and technology of rich countries, but it has also brought to the world crime, pollution, drugs, disease and refugees. Surely, great challenges to peace, prosperity and justice lie ahead for the United Nations.

Sadly for all of us, the Organization has not been able to live up to the mandate conferred upon it by the United Nations Charter, let alone up to the expectations of peoples. The reasons for that are two-fold: the membership has failed the United Nations, and the leadership has failed the peoples. We must work collectively to change that.

The Brahimi report is telling evidence that both the Security Council and the Secretariat failed the people of Rwanda and Srebrenica. The United Nations pulled out of those places just as simmering ethnic disputes were quickly sliding into disastrous conflicts that caused colossal loss of life, and at a time when people in those places needed a stronger United Nations presence. If the Security Council turned a blind eye to impending disaster, the Secretariat was unable to convince the Council to do what was needed to avert it.

Though it is making efforts, the world body has also not been able to make much of a dent in the problem of eliminating poverty and backwardness. We must not shift blame among each other. Rather, we should make a collective resolve to build a better common future.

On questions of peace and security, we appreciate the innovative efforts of the Secretary-General to bring on-board regional organizations in realizing common purposes. However, we must make sure that there is no conflict of interest and that the United Nations provides leadership and does not remain a mere spectator when actions are taken on its behalf. Neither should it let a pattern develop whereby it steps in when unilateral action is over. Preventive steps based on analytical information collected from different sources and independently verified would bring greater value for the United Nations money. The Brahimi report provides many useful recommendations, and needs to be examined thoroughly in order to make the best use of it.

Sanctions have adversely affected innocent people and innocent third countries. The United Nations must find a way to mitigate such effects and compensate innocent third countries.

There is no doubt that the withdrawal of gratis personnel has stripped the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of much-needed human resources. But that must not be used as an excuse for every failure of United Nations operations. We must find the way to remedy the situation in a manner acceptable to all and equitable to all.

We recall that an overwhelming number of statements at the Millennium Summit underlined the fact that poverty is the root cause of conflict. Hence, world leaders have also committed to a number of developmental goals. The United Nations must not let this renewed momentum fizzle out. It must take serious measures to facilitate delivery on the pledge the leaders have made to spark sustained growth, reduce poverty, preserve the environment and to tackle problems such as gender imbalances, illiteracy and disease, including the AIDS epidemic. We must ensure that the creative energies of peoples and the socially responsible private sector are unleashed by promoting market-friendly and innovative development. The United Nations must lead in coordinating activities with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other international and regional bodies to foster synergy for speedy development.

Nepal applauds Secretary-General Annan for bringing Africa to the world's attention. Africa indeed needs attention commensurate with its problems, but so do other needy countries — in particular less developed and land-locked countries. What has struck my delegation the most about the report is the fact that there is no mention of certain major recent and future events. Such events include the South Summit and the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in which Africa and other regions facing similar problems have huge stakes. I hope I have not overlooked such references.

Development is an area in which the Organization can do much as a facilitator and catalyst. However, it

has been largely unable to deliver on that. It appears that the Organization is still losing more of its capacity, as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other bodies and units of the Organization fear being curtailed or even eliminated. We must come up with more imaginative solutions to our development funding problems at the high-level event next year, as well as at conferences of least developed and land-locked countries. In addition, we must work together to put the Organization back on a steady course as a catalyst for development and progress.

The protection of children and other vulnerable groups in conflicts and disasters, as well as the plight of refugees, are common concerns for us all. Nepal appreciates the efforts of the United Nations in these areas, in particular its efforts to help resolve refugee problems in many parts of the world, including the problem of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. An integrated approach to peacekeeping and human rights might help bring about synergy in the efforts of the Organization in this area.

Humanitarian intervention has become a major issue of late, and the Secretary-General's report expresses concern as to how another Rwanda can be averted. There is no doubt that we must not tolerate massacres in the name of sovereignty, nor should anyone be allowed to trample upon the sovereignty of any State in any other way than that provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

The answer lies neither in intervention nor in letting massacres happen, but in efforts to prevent "gross and systematic violations" of human rights by addressing disputes before they turn into disasters, through political understanding and diplomacy. If we were to agree on intervention, the obvious question rises: for how long do we intervene? Intervention does not remove deep-seated hatred and animosity. Rather, we must tear down the walls of hatred, build bridges, and enhance social harmony through participatory governance, economic development, and distributive justice.

The United Nations has done much to improve its efficiency and pare down its costs. We support the Secretary-General in these efforts. But there is more that can be done to cut corners, to remove waste and to spruce up its performance. However, staff retrenchment alone — though essential where redundancy exists — will not suffice. We must overhaul the system. We must stop politically motivated recruitment and promotion linked with it. We must make the system more result-oriented, merit-based, yet representative and effective. We must streamline its headquarters and field offices, reform its financial rules and regulations; and equip it with the latest management techniques and technologies. These measures are essential if the United Nations is to be a force attuned to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nepal appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to reach out to the private sector and civil society. We would, however, like to echo the wise counsel of the former leader of one of our friendly countries: trust but verify. At the same time, we would also encourage the Secretariat to dedicate more of its time and resources to the core responsibilities for which it exists, rather than to peripheral activities that are helpful but not necessarily critical.

To conclude, my delegation commends and supports the Secretary-General for the good work he has been doing and for the leadership he has been providing. We also urge him to be more mindful of the needs and sensitivities of small and poor countries. Every country must feel connected and included; every concern of regional and global significance must find its proper place in the global agenda with which the United Nations is entrusted. Nepal is willing to do its part to move beyond mere supportive sentiments.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The recently concluded Millennium Summit places the debate on the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization at a very different level from that of previous years. We must recognize that more than 150 heads of State made statements on the main priorities to be dealt with by the international community in coming years.

Against this background, the Secretary-General has submitted an important report on the work of the Organization since the last General Assembly. In our opinion, the current report should be read within the general context established by the Millennium Report, "We the peoples", which reiterates many of the thoughts and questions that have given Mr. Kofi Annan the very extraordinary moral and political stature he enjoys today in the international community. The report offers us an opportunity to move forward in our thinking on the main themes being debated at this

General Assembly, thereby building the necessary convergence so that the United nations can carry out the mandates given to it by the heads of State.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts abut three global aspects of the report that have special relevance for my country. The first aspect relates to global governance, and the questions of peacekeeping in particular, and the response to humanitarian disasters. As the Secretary-General so rightly has indicated, this is in the context of the international community's preferential concern for the rights of the individual.

We already know the huge risks for international peace — as well as for the prestige and credibility of this Organization — that have resulted from the humanitarian and political failures of recent years. We also know that these issues cover a variety of operations that are increasingly specialized and complicated, as well as increasingly interconnected among themselves. They involve the military, humanitarian, social and political spheres. What runs through them all, nonetheless, is a question that the Secretary-General raised in the Millennium Report, and this can be summed up as "the intervention dilemma".

As indicated in the report, it is relatively easy to condemn humanitarian disasters, massacres, massive violations of human rights and the racist ideology that underlies the systems of apartheid or the persecution of minorities. But we still do not know how to act when these events occur. This is why my country, aware of the difficulties resulting from the sensitive nature of this topic, welcomes with interest the invitation from Canada to join an independent commission on intervention and State sovereignty. This commission would explore the circumstances and the bases upon which the international community ought to intervene to help resolve intolerable humanitarian situations despite claims of national sovereignty.

It is clear that the problem is based on our ability to give the Organization greater legitimacy in its work. This implies, first of all, the reform of the Security Council, since it is mainly on the basis of the Council's decisions — expanded, participatory and transparent ones — that the international community can face the very difficult decisions required by the questions of governance in today's world.

Another fundamental aspect of global governance, separate from the aforementioned — and this should be discussed in and of itself — relates to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General was quite right in requesting an independent panel of experts to submit a report on peacekeeping operations. Chile attaches particular importance to the Brahimi report and is studying its proposals carefully. Among these proposals, we find recommendations that could be adopted quickly, whereas others require a more cautious approach in order to build broad consensus. We understand, in any case, that the report requires political will and compliance, with the financial commitments of all, and particularly those who have assumed a decisive role in international affairs, towards this Organization.

Another aspect of governance relates to the promotion of development. It is obvious that the expectations of four decades of development have not been met and, accordingly, there is disappointment, which is starting to turn into alarm, not only in the poorest countries but also in many countries that believed that they had found the path to progress. The meetings of the financial institutions that are identified with the current international order are facing protests from sectors of civil society, and there are fears of growing reaction against globalization.

In fact, more and more people are rightly questioning the value of a civilization that sets the endless accumulation of profit as its primary goal at the expense of satisfying social needs. No one today is unaware of the fact that globalization creates enormous opportunities for those who can participate in it, but that it also further widens the gulf of inequality for those who are left out of this contemporary phenomenon.

We cannot fail to note that the protests have been directed not against the United Nations, but against specialized economic organizations. That may be because it is felt that the values and principles of the United Nations are to ensure that, along with growth, equity is preserved in the distribution of wealth at the national and global levels. It is also possible, however, that this is only a partial explanation and that there is another that is less comforting. Perhaps the protests have not reached the United Nations because, although we repeat year after year that development is at the centre of the Organization's work, our action is peripheral with respect to the major issues determining the nature of the international economic order.

We must not, of course, overlook the Organization's economic work, in particular the activities of the specialized agencies of the system, which do commendable work on multilateral assistance for development. We wonder, however, whether it is also effectively implementing its mandate and assuming its responsibility to promote development. We must recognize that, with a few exceptions, our influence on the world economic environment has been minor. This is simply because Member States have preferred to leave that task to other institutions.

The current situation demonstrates, however, that the promotion of development with equity cannot be relegated to mere technical discussion. The promotion of an international economic environment that is sensitive to the requirements of development — in particular, that of the developing countries and the most vulnerable individuals — is a political decision that requires broad consensus on the part of the international community. The only organization with the necessary political legitimacy to carry out this role is the United Nations.

The fundamental issue today is to decide, on the basis of our Charter mandate, how the United Nations can play a role in the great economic decisions that determine the international economic environment. This will require reform of the international financial and monetary system and the determination of the pace and selection of the sectors to be involved in the liberalization of international trade. As to the volume and characteristics of official development assistance and external debt relief and the implementation of this commitment jointly with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, we feel that a United Nations that is given a hearing in the consideration of important international economic affairs would be very useful in attaining the objectives of people-centred sustainable development, which is the common objective of all international economic institutions.

Its primary work in this area would be identifying world economic problems and heightening awareness of the need to address them, taking into account the requirements of development. In this context, we appreciate the Secretary-General's commitment to the success of the high-level international event on financing for development, which has been strengthened by the mandate that our heads of State gave him in the Millennium Declaration. The event, which we believe should be convened as a global conference, will be worthwhile if it responds to a resolute will to revitalize the role of the United Nations in promoting an international economic order that is sensitive to the values of justice and equity on which the Organization is based. It should also be capable of promoting concertation with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and other appropriate agencies and of moving forward in a spirit of renewed association for development among developed and developing countries.

The question of sustainable development, in particular the Rio +10 conference to be held in two years, is another issue that is related to the foregoing in several ways and is of particular concern to Chile. We share the Secretary-General's concern regarding the loss of visibility and political importance of the topic of sustainable development. The conference will offer an excellent opportunity to revitalize the subject, which is so important to future generations.

The recent information received on the shrinking of the ozone layer has direct bearing on Chile, since it is occurring in the Antarctic region. The expansion of dead zones in the oceans and the melting of the polar icecap are of great concern and require our immediate consideration.

The United Nations work in the promotion and protection of human rights is of vital importance to my delegation. As a country that has occasionally benefited from the Organization's work in this field, Chile agrees with the Secretary-General on the need to continue strengthening and reinforcing that work, in particular through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, both in the area of civil and political rights and in the sphere of economic, social and cultural rights.

For Chile, the universality of human rights means the intrinsic dignity of all inhabitants of the planet as a whole. Neither the lack of development nor the special features of specific cultures can be invoked to justify any limitation on human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With regard to the advancement of women, intense and arduous work has been done to achieve recognition of their rights as inherent human rights. In this connection, what is both revealing and discouraging is the fact that, after the follow-up exercise of the Fourth World Conference on Women,

most commitments remain to be fulfilled. The report of the United Nations Population Fund entitled *The State of World Population 2000* offers discouraging commentary in this connection. It confirms that, unfortunately, there are still situations in which women are at a disadvantage and their most fundamental rights are violated. We should make the struggle to overcome this hurdle the basis of our work to comply with the commitment in the twenty-first century to integrate more than half of humankind into the full exercise and enjoyment of the human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As a result of the Millennium Summit, there would appear to exist a new atmosphere of solidarity and a common attitude towards the great challenges we face on the changing international scene. However, one major task remains ahead. It will be necessary to determine whether we have not only the will, but also — and even more difficult — the political capacity to ensure that the United Nations can supply the great responses expected and required of us by our peoples, the common citizens from whom we have received our mandate.

Mr. Vento (Italy): The Secretary-General's report this year shapes a sweeping picture of the United Nations wide-ranging activities. At the close of the second millennium, the sheer volume of the United Nations activity provides tangible proof of the Organization's role as the universal guarantor of the highest aspirations in the areas of international peace and security, development and human rights.

Italy's deep belief in the United Nations ongoing vitality is reflected in the commitment and support we have constantly provided and intend to increase in the future. We do so not only as the fifth top contributor to the regular budget and the sixth top contributor to the peacekeeping budget, but also through national initiatives in the areas of debt relief, post-conflict reconstruction, response to natural catastrophes and our support for the United Nations food and agricultural institutions in Rome and other United Nations bodies headquartered in Italy.

The Secretary-General's summary of the past year's activities makes extensive reference to the Millennium Summit and to the related follow-up action. Italy welcomes the strong appeals made for a democratic reform of the Security Council aimed at making it more representative and effective. We are encouraged by the fact that only a very small minority of Member States expressed support for an increase in new national permanent seats.

Secondly, we all have to consider the recommendations of the Panel of experts chaired by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. The group sought concrete answers to the many questions raised by peacekeeping operations in recent months. Its report makes a technical rather than a political contribution and should therefore be submitted to the United Nations policy-making bodies, starting with the General Assembly, for an assessment of its political implications and practical feasibility.

Many of the proposals point to serious problems with the mandates, format and working procedures of peacekeeping operations. An in-depth study of these proposals is an urgent matter. The experience of a growing number of peacekeeping operations points to a critical need for a broader, more integrated vision of the three distinct stages of the maintenance of international peace and security, that is to say, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. If lasting peace is to be achieved, these three stages are inseparable.

The tripling of the peacekeeping budget in the past year alone has entailed larger contributions from Member States. My country, for example, is being asked to increase its allotment of the previous year, with a contribution to the peacekeeping budget for the current year which will approach an estimated $110 million. As a matter of definition of our priorities, we would prefer to devote greater political capital, as well as greater material resources, to conflict prevention and to supporting countries with unstable social, civil and economic structures.

Another lesson to be learned from episodes in the recent past is the need for a better use and rationalizing of the structures we already have at our disposal. The United Nations Staff College in Turin plays a useful role, working closely with the Secretariat to hold training courses for hundreds of officials from United Nations departments, agencies and programmes. The Secretary-General's report postulates the expansion of its activities, while the debate that the General Assembly is about to initiate on improving United Nations peacekeeping structures will provide clearer guidance in this respect. Italy is ready to do its part and

contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations Staff College in Turin.

Emergency situations in the Balkans and Africa in particular have highlighted the fundamental support provided by the Brindisi Logistics Base, located at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, between the Balkans, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. The Brindisi Base is playing an even greater role than originally expected. The most pressing short-term need of the Base is to replenish the stockpile of required materials. Both the Brahimi report and the Secretary-General make specific proposals in this regard that should not go unheeded.

A streamlined, more effective management of peace operations will demand a greater and more qualified commitment on all the subjects involved. As a follow-up to the report we expect from the Secretariat, the competent statutory organs will have to adopt the necessary measures, acting from a new perspective and with a renewed sense of determination. We need both the authorities of the General Assembly and the involvement of the Security Council.

Action by the United Nations alone will not be enough. A new sense of responsibility is required on the part of each and every Member State, in cooperation with regional organizations. It is only natural that the primary responsibility of the Security Council should extend beyond the moment of decision on individual, single peacekeeping missions and include direct support for the same. Stronger ties are needed between the policy and decision-making process, entrusted primarily to the Security Council members, and human and financial resources support for single missions, often provided by non-members of the Security Council. Moreover, troop-contributing countries should be given a greater say in the operations where they are fielding their own personnel. Thus the Brahimi report's recommendations in this regard deserve, in our view, a prominent place in our future discussions.

Peace and development are inextricably linked. The Secretary-General's report once again spells out his message clearly. In accordance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter, the General Assembly is the supreme governing body for all matters under United Nations competence, to which, in fact, the Security Council provides accounts of its activities, pursuant to Article 15. At the same time, the General Assembly must be placed in a position allowing it to address with vision and effectiveness its political, legal, social and economic responsibilities. In the latter sector it is assisted by the United Nations body entrusted by the Charter with the handling of economic and social affairs, the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly can carry out these functions either directly or by stimulating the commitment of other international players. In the past two years, laudable efforts have been made to promote synergy with the main non-governmental partners, starting with the heads of national parliaments and business leaders, who must become increasingly aware of their social responsibilities in the area of solidarity.

In this instance, this year's report could have dwelt at greater length on the renewed authority and initiative of the Economic and Social Council, particularly in the coordination of its work with that of the Bretton Woods institutions. The economic, health and security difficulties that still plague various regions of the world can be addressed with better prospects for success if existing United Nations instruments are fully utilized.

Of course, efforts to foster development must be complemented by Member States' commitment and their prompt, targeted development assistance initiatives. In view of our deeply felt perception that servicing their foreign debt represents an unjust burden for many countries, Italy has decided to cancel over $6 billion in trade and assistance credits over three budgetary years. That is why we are glad to learn that in the current meetings in Prague the international financial institutions are increasingly moving along these same lines highlighted by the Italian initiatives.

At the turn of the century, we are living an extraordinary moment in international relations characterized by extraordinary changes and extraordinary problems, but also by extraordinary possibilities that can be realized only through strong political will.

Confronted with the contrast between the new challenges of globalization and age-old threats, the world today is demanding greater justice for all, a justice that translates not only into growing efficiency and transparency in United Nations bodies and procedures, but also into institutional reforms that give visible testimony to the commitment of Member States to common and deeply shared objectives and values.

The adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court in 1998 and the preparatory work for its establishment are the most significant recent developments in this direction.

It is Italy's hope that the Secretary-General's appeal for prompt ratification of the Statute and the urgent entry into force of the Court will receive a positive and attentive response from all Member States.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization for this year. This report clarifies once again the efforts made by the United Nations to face international challenges in different fields, and details the Organization's contributions to bringing about peace. Furthermore, it includes a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations and provides recommendations aimed at helping the Organization to undertake such activities in a better manner in the future.

This discussion every year provides us with an occasion to make our remarks and state our positions regarding the content of the annual report on the work of the Organization. In this framework, we share the Secretary-General's concerns expressed at the beginning of the report regarding the eruption of new conflicts in many parts of the world during the past year and the continuation of many other longstanding conflicts that continue to defy the many intensive efforts by the Secretary-General and other mediators to find solutions. In addition, we are pleased by the observation in another part of the report that the realization of peace remains the United Nations first and foremost objective. This is clearly shown by the extensive coverage of the efforts made to resolve disputes, particularly in Africa.

In this context, my delegation commends the United Nations for the assistance it has provided to African endeavours. We believe that Africa needs more support in order to put an end to the remaining conflicts and to prevent the emergence of future crises that might scuttle current achievements. We believe that the real problems of Africa can be dealt with only through a comprehensive approach that takes into account African priorities. Supporting the initiatives of African leaders and adopting the conclusions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are needed to put an end to old conflicts and to mobilize international efforts to bring about peace.

Africa fully recognizes that it has to face its own challenges and undertake its own development. But international cooperation in this area is still a major element. Africa cannot achieve sustainable development or succeed in eradicating poverty — which the Secretary-General repeatedly describes as the most important challenge facing the African continent — unless we deal with Africa's foreign debt burden, which amounts to more than $350 billion. Africa needs an international programme to eradicate malaria and HIV/AIDS, which is currently devastating 24 African countries. My delegation, which appreciates the will expressed by the heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit, hopes that serious programmes to combat HIV/AIDS will be implemented. We hope that as part of this overall effort, the initiative to provide drugs at affordable prices will also be implemented.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's effort to put the needs of Africa on the list of priorities of the United Nations development cluster. We call on the United Nations and its specialized agencies to undertake studies on how to promote local manufacturing that makes use of African raw materials and to set up programmes to develop the airports and seaports of the continent. Despite the pledges that the international community has made to help Africa, we must say that Africa needs more concrete actions than mere pledges and eloquent speeches.

The Secretary-General's report shows the negative impact of sanctions on civilians and on neighbouring States. For us, embargoes are not just a source of concern, but also a method to be rejected, since embargoes and sanctions are imposed as a means for exacting revenge. This is the case with the embargo against my country, for instance, where because of suspicion against two individuals — suspicion for which there was no evidence — unjust sanctions were imposed on all segments of the Libyan people. The financial losses due to these embargoes run in the millions of dollars. What is worse is that the United States of America used the period since the collapse of the international balance of power to call on the Security Council to impose sanctions on Libya. Moreover, the United States of America is now preventing the Security Council from adopting a draft resolution to completely lift these sanctions.

I would like to point out that the United States of America is calling for payment of compensation for the victims of Pan Am Flight 103 before the court has reached a judgement concerning this matter. This trashes the legal principle that the defendant is innocent until proven guilty. It also ignores the call of most members of the international community to lift the sanctions against Libya after it had fully complied with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council regarding the Lockerbie accident. In addition, it ignores the Secretary-General's report of June of last year, in which he emphasized that my country has complied fully with all the resolutions of the Security Council concerning this incident.

We agree that the Secretary-General's vision of disarmament is one of the most important elements of the United Nations strategy for the maintenance of international peace and security. On this basis, my country is now a party to most of the international conventions in this field, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

But we must say here that a number of international conventions in this field still need to be reviewed and made more acceptable. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), for example, does not fulfil the aspirations of the people of the world to the eradication of all nuclear weapons throughout the world. The CTBT does not establish a time-frame for the abolition of nuclear weapons arsenals, which are the monopoly of just a few countries. In fact the CTBT affirms the status quo and dashes the aspirations of the people to free the world from the horror of nuclear weapons.

The fact that we share the concerns of the entire international community regarding disarmament does not mean that we ignore the issue of anti-personnel landmines that are only defensive in nature. We believe that the people of the world should concentrate on the destruction of chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles, not just on landmines, which are the simplest form of weapons.

We note the optimism expressed by the Secretary-General in his report regarding pledges by nuclear-weapon States to fully do away with their nuclear arsenals. What is required are effective measures in this field. Talking about destroying nuclear weapons without actually doing that is merely an attempt to deceive the peoples of the world.

The report of the Secretary-General reviews the agreements reached concerning the implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. My country — which has shown its support for the enforcement of international law by acceding to all the international conventions that aim at combating crime — believes that there is a need to take additional measures to establish international regimes to deal with those who commit serious crimes. The present Statute of the International Criminal Court is designed to judge the weak only. We call for its amendment so as to guarantee that all perpetrators of acts of aggression and all drug smugglers and other criminals are brought to justice. The United Nations has attached special importance to international law, and the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/1) clearly shows the activities of the Organization in this field. My delegation would like to express its satisfaction regarding United Nations activities in this field.

Even though the international community has repeatedly called for the respect of international law, this has not been fully accepted and implemented. We believe that a specific country continues to stipulate coercive laws and to apply such laws to companies, countries and individuals of other countries. The Helms-Burton Act and the D'Amato-Kennedy Act are examples of this. Now, as we enter a new millennium in which international norms should be strengthened, we believe that it is important that the international community should exert pressure to abolish such laws since they undermine the noble principles consecrated in the United Nations Charter.

Finally, we would like to commend the Secretary-General for the reforms in human resources in this Organization. We hope these efforts will continue to create an equitable geographical distribution of jobs and to reflect complete clarity and transparency when such jobs are announced.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Speaking for the first time during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, I would like immediately to express to the President my congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly, which this year is known as the Millennium Assembly.

The moment is unique and symbolic, and we are all familiar with the force of symbols, which, in the course of history, has enabled mankind to lay the bases

for a better future. We are here today precisely in order to lay the foundations for common action and for collective action in the spirit of a contract of solidarity and in order to build together the twenty-first century.

We are happy to see that the presidency of this session, which represents a decisive phase in the future of humanity, has been entrusted to such certain, informed and expert hands as those of our President.

I would also like to express to his predecessor our great appreciation for the high-quality work he carried out throughout the fifty-fourth session. In particular we are thinking of the methodical preparation for the Millennium Summit, which greatly facilitated the course and the results produced.

Let us not beat around the bush: he followed the royal path of excellence laid out by his illustrious African predecessors:, Alex Quaison-Sackey, Mongi Slim, Angie Brooks, Bouteflika and others.

We also wish to express to the Secretary-General how much we welcome his excellent reports submitted to the current Millennium Assembly, one of which was devoted to the role of the United Nations during the twenty-first century (A/54/2000) and the other to the work of the Organization (A/55/1), the one we are currently considering today.

The problems that we are facing are identified in this report on the work of the Organization. Solutions are outlined. What remains is to act. Action is required urgently, for time is of the essence.

All delegations have asserted this a few days ago. We have lived through an unprecedented event in history: the gathering of nearly 150 heads of State and Government. The conclusions of these historic meetings reflect the fact that all peoples of the world greatly aspire to peace and justice, to sustainable human development and to the reaffirmation of certain values which humanity shares, values without which, to speak like the poet, "the earth would no longer be the earth".

On the occasion of this Millennium Assembly, the international community displayed its confidence in our common future, facing the many challenges which it is confronting and will confront in the century which is dawning. Cameroon is particularly happy that the central role of the United Nations and its ideals were clearly reaffirmed, but President Paul Biya added on 7 September from this rostrum:

> "In truth our world needs ethics. As a set of moral values, ethics constitute an essential expectation on the part of the entire human community as a whole."

Indeed it is through ethics that we will restore the individual to the centre of our efforts. It is through ethics that our decisions and deliberations will acquire new dimensions. This is why we would like to reiterate the proposal made by President Paul Biya for the establishment within the Secretariat of the United Nations of a committee, or an international observatory, on ethics to promote among nations and within nations universal and fundamental human values.

It is undeniable that in a half-century of existence the United Nations can be credited with many achievements in the promotion of peace, human rights and development. However, the work is far from over — quite the contrary. The Secretary-General notes this in his report. New challenges are taking shape on the horizon, and each day they confirm the need for radical reform of the United Nations in order for it to become an effective tool in the service of peoples.

At the same time, we have to make sure that the role of the General Assembly is preserved. At the same time, we also want the composition of the Security Council to be reviewed with a view to its enlargement, so as to ensure that there is much more equitable representation that would take into account the changes in the world.

The persistence of areas of tension and conflict in the world, and in particular in Africa, and the lessons from recent involvements of the United Nations in the cause of peace require the urgent adoption of adequate measures and the necessary resources in order to carry out truly effective peacekeeping operations.

In that connection, my country welcomes and supports the conclusions and recommendations of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. In our opinion, implementing those recommendations would give the United Nations a real capacity to take action where "blue helmets" are deployed. United Nations forces must, in particular, consistently be given clear mandates and sufficient means to ensure the protection of civilians. My delegation will return to this matter when the Assembly considers the Brahimi report and analyses its recommendations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations to promote peace should be developed and encouraged. Here, it is important that the operational capacities of those organizations be strengthened to take full advantage of their proximity to the environment in which a conflict is taking place and of their familiarity with it. In that context, it is important to welcome the unflagging support of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole for the efforts being made by the countries of Central Africa to acquire a subregional system for the prevention and management of armed conflict and crisis. It is worth recalling that such efforts recently led to the creation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), which is supported by a Central African multinational force. The purpose of the force is to carry out missions to maintain, restore and build peace. The countries of Central Africa hope that the international community will actively support the implementation of these mechanisms to enable them fully to play their role and to make it possible for the peoples of the subregion to emerge from the spiral of war, violence, lack of security and fear in which they have been trapped for so many years.

Beyond efforts to put an end to hostilities, there is an urgent need to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes. That will be one of the major challenges for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. It is worth recalling the popular adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Here, the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a matter for grave concern. Besides exacerbating violent and murderous conflicts, that trade undermines the security, stability and development of affected countries. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, scheduled for 2001, should lead to the adoption of a national, regional and international plan of action to help in effectively combating this scourge, which too often undermines peace processes and post-conflict peace-building.

A number of other speakers have mentioned the need for conflict prevention, because unfortunately a very high human and material cost attaches to conflict settlement. That is why my country strongly favours a more resolute commitment by the United Nations to promote a culture of peace. Here again, we will have an opportunity to return to this subject later in the session.

Another cause of conflict for which it is important to mobilize the efforts of the United Nations and of the international community is poverty. Combating poverty should be the top priority for the United Nations. This necessarily requires a just and equitable solution to the problem of indebtedness, which is stifling the countries of the third world and dooming their development efforts to failure. Here again, we should call upon the rich countries for greater solidarity. A number of commendable efforts have, of course, been made in this sphere, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. But decisive steps are still needed to genuinely restore the development prospects of the many countries whose meagre resources continue to be sucked into the vortex of debt servicing. The rich countries must manifest the necessary political will and solidarity. Such solidarity should be based on a clear-sighted perception of the interdependence of countries, regions and peoples. It should also be reflected with respect to development assistance. Here, a troubling trend towards fatigue is emerging, while new challenges to humanity demand greater development assistance.

The inexorable progress of AIDS threatens the annihilation of entire nations and societies; the fight against that disease should mobilize the efforts of the international community and of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General reminds us in a troubling way that AIDS is now killing four times as many people in Africa each year as the continent's armed conflicts. The Security Council's January 2000 debate on this subject was one encouraging sign of a growing awareness of what is at stake in this terrifying pandemic, which has become a grave threat to international stability. That is why my country, following the recent thirteenth International AIDS Conference, held in South Africa, calls for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Globalization, another topic addressed in the Secretary-General's report, is another of the major challenges for the future, when the United Nations must demonstrate an ability to adapt to change. There is a striking contrast between the technological advancement of a portion of humanity and the dire poverty of the rest. The United Nations is duty-bound to play a role in ensuring that the benefits of

globalization are enjoyed by all peoples rather than being limited to a small group.

In the same spirit, we consider it important that the international financial structures be reformed. International Monetary Fund and World Bank programmes for developing countries should be adapted in the light of our discussions here in the General Assembly. This is an opportunity for us to tell the Assembly of Cameroon's full support for the Secretary-General's proposals concerning international partnership.

Cameroon welcomes and encourages all change directed towards peace and conflict resolution, throughout the world. My country remains convinced that the promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights is an invaluable contribution to strengthening international peace and security. This strong conviction is the basis of our commitment to democracy and our deliberate choice of a legal settlement of Cameroon's dispute with Nigeria over the land and sea border.

Finally, Cameroon will continue to make its contribution to the United Nations peace efforts by making available, to the extent possible, its human, material and financial resources to those missions and operations.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation has examined the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. We would like to express to him our appreciation for all his efforts in assuming the enormous responsibility of managing the work of the Organization and its actions based on the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, thus enabling the Organization to assume its important role in achieving international peace and security and cooperation among Member States in the economic and social areas.

Concerning the establishment of peace and security, we note that in paragraph 31 the Secretary-General says:

> "collective security can no longer be narrowly defined as the absence of armed conflict be it between or within States." (*A/55/1, para. 31*)

For example, the vast displacement of civilian populations has led to crises equal to those brought about by wars and conflicts, because of the trials and tribulations of those displaced persons: hunger, thirst, lack of safe housing, the spread of disease and rising crime rates. Moreover, international terrorism threatens the stability and security of many States, leading to the destruction of their economies.

With regard to disarmament, my country fully agrees with the Secretary-General, particularly in paragraph 103, and with his profound concern about the continuing risk posed by nuclear weapons, despite some progress in reducing them. The Arab Gulf region is one of the threatened areas. That is why we call for intensified international efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in our region.

With regard to meeting humanitarian commitments, paragraph 109 of the report refers to humanitarian emergencies that far surpass the worst-case scenarios. We therefore call on the Organization to adopt necessary and effective measures, including recommendations presented to the General Assembly, to deal with humanitarian emergencies by mandating relevant United Nations authorities to take such necessary measures. Bahrain also believes that there is a need for coordinating efforts of humanitarian assistance and relief with relevant non-governmental organizations.

Regarding cooperation for development, paragraph 156 states that there are two challenges facing development in the era of globalization: first, to guarantee the effective participation of all States in the global trading system, and, secondly, to promote social and environmental goals as an integral part of our economic and financial strategies. Paragraph 157 of the report refers to international concern about those challenges. We believe that the General Assembly and its specialized organs should look into the matter so as to find internationally acceptable and practical ways to deal with the problems hampering development in the globalization era. The Secretary-General's report has spoken of the issues that affect the international community, of the importance of international cooperation and of guaranteeing the political will of Member States to achieve that cooperation in order to strike a balance between the interests of States as a whole and the individual national interests of each State individually.

Another matter we wish to touch upon is peacekeeping operations, which are experiencing an acute crisis for political and financial reasons. The

Organization is finding it difficult to face these problems. We continue to call for preventive diplomacy to prevent conflicts, but we realize that it is not possible in all cases and that each conflict has its own characteristics, not to mention the Organization's critical financial situation. The report of the Panel presided over by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi is very good, but where are we to find the necessary financing to implement its recommendations?

The United Nations is going through a critical stage at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We were hoping that the situation would be better so that it could enter the century stronger and more efficient.

Mr. Sharma (India): Permit me to compliment the President on the skill with which he has conducted the work of the Assembly and to say what a pleasure it is to see him presiding at this session.

The Assembly will be relieved to know that, to assist it in its work, I shall read out only portions of my somewhat longer statement.

We join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization and for introducing it at the beginning of the general debate. We also thank him and the Secretariat for their tireless efforts to make the Millennium Summit a success.

As the Secretary-General has said, we must read his report on the work of the Organization together with the one he prepared for the Summit and, in deciding on priorities for action, bear in mind what our leaders had to say when they met here earlier this month.

When he spoke to the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General in effect said that to act on the priorities set by the Summit, the United Nations must wage four fights: for development, against injustice, against violence and for the environment. We are glad that the Secretary-General sees those as tasks for the entire United Nations system to carry out because there was some ambiguity in his report, which listed those tasks in the section on peace and security as elements of the even more ambiguous concept of human security. This is not a quibble over words. Over the last few years, the Security Council has used an elastic concept of security to stretch its mandate well beyond what the Charter gave it. This is a development about which the majority of the membership of the United Nations is deeply uncomfortable. We would not like the Secretariat to promote this minority view. Economic and social problems can constitute a threat to peace and security only if they are allowed to fester. They cannot be addressed by bodies like the Security Council.

Last year, the Secretary-General asked the General Assembly to consider the challenges raised by what has come to be known as humanitarian intervention. As he acknowledges in his report, the vast majority of the membership rejected the concept. It is absent from the Millennium Declaration, the silence of our leaders being proof that it has gained no currency in the course of a year. But, in his report this year, the Secretary-General asks

> "if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica — to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?" (*A/55/1, para. 37*)

By definition, those cases were exceptions to which an immediate and exceptional response should have been forthcoming. That response was absent not because of an absence of doctrine. The international community failed to act not because it did not have a theoretical underpinning for action, but because of a failure of political will and leadership. The danger in generalizing from exceptions is too obvious to have to be belaboured. We understand and share the Secretary-General's concern, but humanitarian intervention is not the answer.

We agree with the Secretary-General that peacekeeping is a vital area of the work of the United Nations. The surge in United Nations peacekeeping over the last year shows how much it is needed. The problems that beset it must be corrected. We therefore welcomed the appointment of the Brahimi Panel. With other Member States, we are carefully considering the Panel's courageous and far-reaching report. We believe that the Secretariat should not act piecemeal on its recommendations, which should be implemented only after they have been examined and approved by Member States.

Towards the end of its report, the Brahimi Panel refers in passing to a question that is crucial not only to peacekeeping, but to the credibility of the United Nations. The Panel refers to that question as "equitable

representation on the Security Council". The Secretary-General rightly reminded the Assembly when he introduced his report that our heads of State and Government have called for a reform that will make the Council more representative and legitimate, but also more effective.

The Council cannot claim to act on behalf of the general membership in the present circumstances. The lack of adequate representation of developing countries in the Council severely impairs its functioning and casts a shadow over the legitimacy of its decisions, which impact mainly on developing countries. We therefore hope that the reform and expansion of the Council will receive, after the Millennium Summit, the attention it deserves. We share the hope expressed by the President while closing the general debate that there is a willingness by the majority to move forward on this issue.

The Secretary-General and the United Nations system as a whole have placed increasing emphasis on good governance. This might be a concept on which a common definition still eludes us, but there is a general consensus that without democracy there can be no good governance. Like all democracies, we are pleased that democracy is increasingly the norm, casting aside dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. Yet, there has been some regression. In his report, the Secretary-General refers to two recent instances, but is silent on others. We laud his commitment to work with the Commonwealth and the international community on the matter of Fiji. We hope that he will use his moral authority to build international opinion against the military juntas that have overthrown democratically elected Governments and do nothing within the United Nations that would either give them any respectability or reason to believe that the international community had condoned their actions.

International terrorism is the growing menace of our age, battening on open, liberal, democratic and law-abiding societies. It is a collective challenge to societies everywhere, and can be countered only through cooperative endeavour. In the Millennium Declaration, our leaders committed themselves to concerted action. We hope for the early adoption of the comprehensive convention against terrorism now under discussion in the Assembly. In his report, the Secretary-General too has recognized terrorism as a direct threat to our collective security. We hope that the Secretariat's reports will focus more sharply than they presently do on international terrorists and the States that sponsor, finance and assist them.

We agree with the Secretary-General that disarmament is a critical element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security, and share his assessment that despite some progress in the reduction of nuclear weapons there is deep concern within the international community at the continuing risk posed by such weapons. We are disappointed that his report does not focus on the achievable goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that the United Nations has the foremost responsibility to promote nuclear disarmament. This should be both articulated and pursued as one of its highest priorities. The Secretary-General's leadership will be crucial in that task, as well as in convening quickly the international conference to identify ways to eliminate nuclear dangers.

Although the preamble of the Charter enjoins us to promote social progress and better standards of life and greater freedom, the United Nations record is mixed. As the Secretary-General has highlighted in paragraph 68 of his millennium report, half of the world's population still must try to survive on less than $2 a day. Some 1.2 billion people subsist on less than $1 a day. Removing such abject poverty must be the highest priority for the United Nations, an organization that would otherwise be irrelevant for the poor. Multilateral development cooperation must, therefore, be the central tenet of the United Nations, and even more so in the era of globalization and its pressures.

This requires the creation of an enabling international economic environment, transfer of technology, guaranteed special and differential treatment to products and services of export interest of developing countries, so that they can benefit from integration in the global trading system and the like. These are the issues on which the United Nations must act but where it is currently marginalized. The United Nations has institutional centrality on this crucial issue for future generations in the developing world and must claim it for the general good.

The era of globalization and liberalization, in which we live today, promised to humankind opportunities of unprecedented prosperity, and it was hoped that the free flow of capital, goods and services would bring about sustained and equitable economic growth for all nations. This, however, has not happened

and is not around the corner. The benefits have spread unevenly, resulting in a world where there is prosperity in a smaller part and poverty in the larger, where disparities and incoming wealth between nations and within nations are widening.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 155 of his annual report on the work of the Organization, this has resulted in disquiet that is evident not only in the streets, as manifested in violent protests in Seattle and, more recently, in the Czech Republic, but also in the concerns about the consequences of globalization that pervade much of the developing world. To enable globalization to be a powerful and dynamic force for growth and development, it is essential that its benefits spread more equitably and the process be made more inclusive.

The United Nations has an institutional responsibility to conduct the discourse on the universally advantageous and corrective course of the globalization process. The Secretary-General has correctly pointed out in paragraph 16 of his annual report that these goals cannot be achieved without effective global institutions. We believe that global financial instability and volatility of capital flows pose serious problems for sustained economic development in developing countries; therefore, urgent reforms in the international financial architecture must be undertaken. We hope that the high-level event on financing for development to be held in 2001 will offer, we hope, the international community an opportunity to comprehensively address the diverse aspects of development, including the strengthening of international financial institutions for developmental purposes.

India believes that the test of economic growth and development is that it must bring about palpable improvement in the lives of the people. We are heartened to note that, while identifying the elimination of poverty worldwide as the most important goal of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has, in paragraph 168 of his annual report, emphasized the need for a new commitment on the part of the international community to transform paper targets into concrete achievements.

On the subject of the environment, while developing countries have done commendable work in the implementation of Agenda 21, the commitments undertaken by developed countries to make available new additional financial resources and environmentally sound technology on concessional terms to developing countries remain unfulfilled. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that the Rio Plus Ten review process should provide an opportunity to reassess what progress has been made towards achieving the targets established by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We also hope that at the Rio Plus Ten meeting the international community will reinvigorate the global partnership needed to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

We have noted from paragraph 187 the work being done by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the field of environmental trade. We must caution that this should not in any way promote new conditionalities on trade and assistance.

Finally, I come to the crucial problem of resources. The Secretary-General refers more than once to the incompatibility between approved mandates and the resources available for their implementation. When the Secretary-General says in paragraph 296 of his report that he could "do more with less, but only up to a point", we agree. And we agree even more with his appeal to the Assembly not to condemn the United Nations to operating with a budget frozen in time. We are concerned that, as the report recalls, "the level of unpaid assessments ... remains unacceptably high". This long-standing problem must be urgently resolved.

In conclusion, I recall the Secretary-General's reminder that our task, and his, is to swiftly translate the Millennium Declaration into reality. It was perhaps apt that at this first General Assembly of a new century there should have been a touch of Janus in the choice of the quotation with which the Secretary-General began his address. The paean to colonialism from which he quoted, Rudyard Kipling's tellingly named "Recessional", is full of poor politics but better poetry, and it has two other lines that we would also do well to recall as we move forward:

> "Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
> Lest we forget — lest we forget".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the exhaustive report he has submitted to the current fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the work of the Organization during the past year.

As he does every year, the Secretary-General has painted a full picture of the United Nations activities over the past 12 months. The report retraces the many diverse tasks of the Organization and highlights the challenges it faces every day in playing its role in accordance with the objectives of the Charter.

The Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the Millennium Summit shows us the road to follow in rising to the challenges that the Secretary-General has analysed clearly and sagaciously in his report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", and in the report before us today on the work of the Organization. His view of the world's situation and prospects is thereby reinforced.

The scope of the Organization's field of action covered in the Secretary-General's report, as well as the brief time available to consider it, require us to focus our attention on some aspects of the report, on which we should like to make the following comments.

We fully share the Secretary-General's opinion on the need for the community of nations to consider globally the various elements contributing to common security as the only approach likely to lead to the establishment of lasting peace. Indeed, the international community is called on to adopt this global and multidimensional approach, which takes account of the links, interaction and interdependence between the objectives of the maintenance of international peace and security, development, the eradication of poverty, the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy and good governance.

It is this approach that Tunisia has adopted and is implementing tirelessly. The Millennium Declaration strengthens this approach at the world level by making these fields of action the highest future priorities of the international community and by affirming the importance of interaction among those fields and their influence on each other.

In the context of the maintenance of international peace and security, we wish to refer to the question of peacekeeping operations, to the consideration of which the Secretary-General has rightly devoted an important place in his report. The Organization is currently at a key stage in its action in this field following the submission of three major reports, two of which address the United Nations experience in Rwanda and Srebrenica, while the third is of a more general scope, providing a global summary of United Nations activity in this field and a vision for the future. The latter report, submitted last August by the Panel chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, contains important recommendations that require the attention of all Member States and in-depth consideration, addressing as they do the fundamental functions of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation will actively participate in the Organization's deliberations on this report.

We endorse the Panel's statement on the need to strengthen the Organization's peacekeeping activities through the adoption of measures related to various aspects of these operations, including enhancing the capacities of the Secretariat, intensifying consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries, improving the conditions of deployment of these operations and other aspects. We also stress the need for the Organization to ensure that any reform designed to improve its capacity does not flout the sacrosanct principles of state sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. These principles are the foundations of the system of international relations on which its very survival is based. They must continue to guide the international community's efforts to address all the world's emergencies, including those in which humanitarian situations become major challenges that must be unequivocally met.

The Secretary-General rightly stresses the need for increased action in support of conflict-prevention. Indeed, today more than ever, conflict-prevention must become a global and integrated strategy to ensure in the long term not only the absence of armed conflict, but that conditions remain conducive to political, economic, social and cultural peace. The international community has the means to adopt such a strategy; what it needs is the will to implement it.

It seems to me that a sensible and viable long-term conflict-prevention strategy must take account of the profound causes of conflicts and of the violence that feeds and flows from them, which often originates

in the poor economic and social conditions of the people they engulf — in other words, in underdevelopment and poverty.

We believe that effective management of the requirements of economic and social development would substantially contribute to preventing the causes of the conflicts and violence prevailing in several regions of the world. In this vein, we believe it necessary to accelerate the economic and social development of the countries of the South, particularly the poorest among them. Africa is certainly a continent that calls for particular attention on the part of the international community. The Millennium Summit clearly stressed that need.

Before I conclude my statement, I wish to refer to the question of sanctions and to stress the interest that should be accorded to the ongoing improvement and refining of their use as a tool at the service of international peace and security. The experience of the past decade has demonstrated the need to change the way sanctions are used so as to alleviate their negative effects on peoples, the significance of which we have noted particularly in the case of such general sanctions regimes as that which has been imposed on Iraq over the course of the past 10 years.

Any reform of the practice of imposing sanctions should take account of certain criteria, including in particular the resort to sanctions only as a last resort once all peaceful means have been exhausted. When sanctions prove necessary, their duration should be limited and clear conditions defined for their lifting or suspension. There must also be a continuous evaluation of the humanitarian repercussions on the people of targeted countries and of the sanctions' direct impact on the interests of third countries.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): This being the first time I have had the honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, I wish to add my voice to all those that have congratulated Mr. Holkeri on his assumption of his important post. My delegation is ready to lend its full support to his endeavours to conduct the work of this session to a successful outcome.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. It provides us with a comprehensive yet concise overview of the activities of the United Nations. It also offers a number of new ideas on how to conduct these activities in the future. In conjunction with the Secretary-General's millennium report, the annual report gives us a unique opportunity to exchange our views on issues before us and to try to chart a course for action to be taken by the United Nations and this Assembly.

Allow me briefly to touch upon a set of issues that my delegation finds of particular importance.

The first is the "dilemma of intervention", a topic that has been at the centre of discussions during the Millennium Summit and the general debate this year. In his report, the Secretary-General rightly points to the changing nature of threats to peace and security. Today the United Nations is increasingly confronted with intra-State conflicts. It should therefore come as no surprise that in dealing with these conflicts we encounter a dilemma between so-called humanitarian intervention and respect for State sovereignty.

If we want the United Nations to act effectively to prevent the worst kinds of mass crimes and to be an effective guardian of international peace and security, we cannot avoid addressing this dilemma. The United Nations Member States in general, and the permanent members of the Security Council in particular, should act in accordance with the Charter and their shared responsibility for peace and security. In the present context, this means that we should not shy away from the issue of intervention, however complex it may be. If we do so, it we will be accepting either passivity on the part of the United Nations with respect to the gravest kinds of mass crimes, or the dangerous threat of interventions bypassing the United Nations.

We note and share the fear expressed by the Secretary-General that, given the reaction to his views on humanitarian intervention, we may fail again next time to prevent tragedies of dramatic proportions such as the ones that took place in Rwanda and Srebrenica. But we should not wait and see if this fear is realized. We should not wait for new atrocities to happen and then see if the international community again witnesses them passively. We should now, without delay, discuss possible ways to lay the foundation for adequate preventive action, including intervention, if and when necessary. Without any doubt, the Security Council in particular should serve as the framework for, and guide of, this process.

In our view, the United Nations is the most appropriate forum for this kind of discussion. We

believe there is an urgent need to elaborate in advance the standards and doctrine for humanitarian intervention, based on a modern interpretation of the Charter and in line with international relations and norms. For this reason we welcome the Canadian initiative and the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. We look forward to the findings and recommendations of this Commission. Hopefully, the input by this Commission will help States to reach consensus on the challenge posed by the "dilemma of intervention".

Through the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, a large majority of States have clearly demonstrated their will to put an end to impunity. The establishment of the International Criminal Court is in many ways a historic step. For the first time in history, there is a mechanism in sight which will, it is hoped, ensure that those responsible for the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, wherever committed, will not go unpunished. We hope that the necessary number of ratifications will be deposited soon, so as to enable the Court to function. The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia is to ratify the Rome Statute before the end of the year.

Another aspect of improving the effectiveness of the United Nations relates to its peace operations. We commend the initiative by the Secretary-General to establish the Panel on Peace Operations, which, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, recently issued a landmark report on the shortcomings of current practices and on ways to overcome them. We support the Panel's recommendations and hope for their early implementation. Some of these recommendations will require additional resources, and Slovenia is willing to contribute its share. As my Foreign Minister already stated in his address to the Assembly, Slovenia has decided to voluntarily relinquish the discount it has enjoyed in the current peacekeeping scale of assessments. Accordingly, beginning next year, Slovenia will contribute its full share to the cost of peacekeeping operations.

I wish also to share some thoughts on the phenomenon of globalization. Recent events in Prague, along with those that took place earlier in Seattle, justify the placement of globalization among the top issues addressed by the Secretary-General's report. No matter how pleased or displeased we may be with it, globalization is inevitable and probably unstoppable. Many feel marginalized and powerless in face of the forces of globalization. What we can do about it, though, is important: we can strive, on the one hand, to maximize its potential to improve people's lives worldwide, and, on the other hand, to prevent or alleviate its negative effects.

Globalization should not translate into an unbridled quest by private corporations for the cheapest labour and highest returns, with no regard for social welfare or the environment. On the contrary, globalization can and should serve as a powerful instrument to bring decent wages, social progress, prosperity and high environmental standards to every corner of the world. For this to happen, Governments, private corporations and international economic and financial institutions, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations, should cooperate with a view to ensuring the effective management of global economic and social affairs. Without such management, the idea of spreading the benefits of globalization will remain an illusion.

In this context, we encourage the Secretary-General to build further on his initiative for a Global Compact and to aim for an early definition, and even codification, of good practices to be observed by all actors of globalization.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Millennium Summit has recently [illegible]ed, and the international community is now awaiting concrete results. The report submitted to us by the Secretary-General this year — and we are very grateful to him for it — constitutes, in our opinion, a valuable reference document on the most recent successes and failures of our Organization, and therefore a useful instrument in designing and undertaking future actions.

The so-called intervention dilemma is reiterated once again in the Secretary-General's report. Cuba's stance on this question is well known.

We cannot hope to see the United Nations contribute to the advent of a safer world if neo-interventionism disguised as humanitarian action is legitimized. The security problems we face today will never be resolved through these so-called humanitarian interventions, which not only pose a grave threat to the security and stability of developing countries, but place the United Nations in a subordinate position, subject to the designs of hegemonistic interests.

Certain States are increasingly ignoring the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have governed international relations for 50 years, and even seeking to do away with them. The current international order — which is unjust and profoundly inequitable — cannot be replaced by an even more primitive one based on a reinterpretation of the Charter and of international law.

We agree with the Secretary-General as to the importance of conflict prevention. The cost of prevention is minimal compared to the losses incurred as a result of conflicts. But in order to be truly effective, prevention strategies require continuing efforts, often unobtrusive and low-profile in the context of the media.

The best form of prevention, and in the long term the only effective one, is to deal with the root causes of conflicts, in particular problems related to economic and social development. It is not by chance that in the past 10 years, more than half of the 45 poorest countries of the world have been the scene of armed conflict or other forms of extreme violence. If due attention is not given to the adverse effects of the imposition of a neo-liberal model in a globalized world, and if the gap between rich and poor countries continues to grow, inevitably we will see an increase in crisis and conflicts.

In the last decade the Security Council has made much more frequent use of sanctions. However, this increased usage has not been accompanied by the elimination or even a reduction in the number of conflicts. The imposition of sanctions should be an extreme measure, and not — as is frequently the case today — a means of punishing certain countries, in pursuit of the narrow national interests of specific members of the Security Council.

Can anyone seriously claim that it is never justifiable to impose sanctions against developed countries that have endangered international peace and security? However, it is not surprising that, since the Security Council is a body in which the developing countries are completely under-represented, the 15 sanctions regimes imposed thus far by the Council have all been imposed on countries of the developing world. It is particularly telling that almost 70 per cent of the sanctions currently in force are directed against African countries.

We are pleased that in the section devoted to human rights development the report of the Secretary-General includes a subsection on "Challenges ahead". However, probably for reasons of space, it is extremely short and makes no reference to a group of questions that are of great importance to Cuba. A minority group of countries has been imposing its approach and views on decisions adopted at the international level in the field of human rights. With but one exception, all the resolutions concerning countries adopted by the Commission on Human Rights since 1990 cite underdeveloped countries as the violators of human rights, and all those resolutions were proposed by developed countries.

We must halt the political manipulation of human rights, the selectivity, partiality and double standards that prevail in the imposition of rigid norms. We must not allow the imposition of absolutist ideas of democracy based on foreign models that in general reflect the approach of the former colonial Powers.

Despite a certain optimistic tone in the report of the Secretary-General with its mention of the results of the year 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is regrettable that some nuclear-weapon States tried until the last moment to prevent inclusion in the final Declaration of the Millennium Summit of even a timid appeal for the convening of an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. This position is at variance with the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate such weapons.

Moreover, how is it possible to explain that, as the report of the Secretary-General reveals, in 1999 annual military expenditures increased for the first time in the post-cold-war period, rising to approximately $780 billion? How much could be achieved if only a very small part of that money were used to promote development?

The payment crisis created by the Organization's principal contributor, in order to impose that country's policies, is affecting the proper functioning of the Organization. The zero-growth budget policy — also imposed by the principal contributor — is unworkable, as it undermines the United Nations capacity to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter, in particular those that relate to economic and social development, and leads to the imposition of certain priorities far from

the interests and needs of the majority of Member States.

Cuba believes that the discussions to be held on reform of the scale of assessments for the regular budget and of the special scale for the financing of peacekeeping operations should result in the elimination of the ceiling on the scale of assessments and the institutionalization of the current special scale.

In conclusion, I would like to refer briefly to the report (A/55/305) on peace operations prepared by a Panel of experts appointed by the Secretary-General, whose recommendations have very significant implications for the future of the United Nations. While some of the recommendations take into account legitimate proposals that many of us have been reiterating in recent years, a significant number of others — many concerning matters outside the competence of the Secretary-General — give cause for concern, at the very least. In any case, there is an obvious need for a process of wide-ranging and transparent discussion within the framework of the General Assembly, where all Member States can participate and where it may be possible to reach consensus on these essential subjects. Cuba will participate actively in this process.

Mr. Adam (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I commend the excellent report of the Secretary-General that the General Assembly is considering today.

Before turning to several points of substance, I would like to emphasize what my country believes is the major conclusion of the Millennium Summit. This is that — despite the criticisms regularly directed at our Organization, criticisms that are justified at times — the Organization is playing and will continue to play a central role in the response of the international community to the many challenges with which it is confronted: above all, the maintenance of international peace and security, but also human development, the management of both the opportunities and the challenges of globalization, and the promotion and protection of human rights. During the discussions of this fifty-fifth session we must bear in mind this unanimous show of support.

We note first the part of the report of the Secretary-General that shows a substantial increase in the resources devoted to United Nations peacekeeping operations; our Organization is now deploying 45,000 military and 13,000 civilian personnel, with the financial consequences that we all know. Further, the report (A/55/305) drafted at the Secretary-General's request by a Panel of eminent persons chaired by Mr. Brahimi makes a series of recommendations on the mandates and conduct of peacekeeping operations, recommendations that have received broad support from Member States. This report is based on findings of the troop-contributing countries themselves and draws lessons that we fully endorse. The implementation of these recommendations will come with a cost that will have to be borne in an equitable manner. It is desirable that the next report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, in 2001, should be able to speak of significant progress in this field. That is why all of us, and in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, must always bear in mind the strong message delivered to us by the heads of State and Government on the irreplaceable role of the United Nations as a guarantor of world peace.

A second issue on which the Secretary-General is rightly focusing his sustained attention is that of globalization and of its consequences for our countries. We are compelled to note, as numerous heads of State and Government have already done, that the available opportunities are shared in a most unequal manner by Member States. Here again our Organization is challenged to find elements of response very quickly, and it is working at that actively, albeit with much difficulty, particularly in the Economic and Social Council.

In this context, I would like to commend once again the initiatives of the Secretary-General with a view to making our Organization reach out to and indeed enter into partnership with organizations in civil society and the private sector, which play determining roles in the multidimensional management of tomorrow's world. This is another aspect of the pioneering action of our Organization in adapting itself to a changing world. The meeting of presiding officers of parliaments that preceded the Millennium Summit also reminded us very appropriately of the concerns of the elected officials of our nations relating to these changes.

On the occasion of this debate, I would like to welcome certain advances made this past year that deserves particular attention. First, the year 2000 will be remembered as the year when the United Nations really came to terms with Africa, following the

issuance in 1998 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (S/1998/318), and through the efforts of a number of Member States, including Belgium. In the future we must work to ensure that Africa will not be left behind by globalization.

The special session on the follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development and the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing + Five both made it possible for the United Nations to reaffirm that the human being is at the centre of its development efforts and to make progress towards a recognition of the universality of certain concepts, in particular women's rights in society.

Next there is the resolute action of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which makes it possible at least to contain to a degree the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus, if not to put an end to it. This pandemic constitutes both a human and an economic disaster for a great many countries and is therefore a factor of profound destabilization.

Belgium would like to voice its concern regarding the humanitarian field, in particular regarding the difficulties encountered by the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations, in terms of having access to zones of conflict, which is often refused to them, as well as their own security, often precarious, as was demonstrated by the murder of three staff members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in West Timor on the eve of the Millennium Summit. The list of victims is becoming longer from year to year. We must effectively protect those staff members and firmly punish their attackers.

Furthermore, like the Secretary-General, we should all be concerned by the fact that the response to the needs announced in the first consolidated inter-agency appeal this year amounted to only 34 per cent of needs, even though the needs in humanitarian aid are immense and economic growth would allow the release of financial gains that would have been quite unexpected only a few years ago.

Lastly, the absence of agreement among Member States regarding internally displaced persons resulting from internal conflicts in the Economic and Social Council's July segment is a deeply regrettable failure for our Organization. We hope that this will be corrected during the current session of the General Assembly.

I cannot leave the subject of the humanitarian field without expressing my Government's sincerest congratulations to Mrs. Sadako Ogata for her activities at the head of UNHCR, as she will be leaving at the end of this year. She fully deserves our gratitude.

To conclude, I would like to say a word about the reform of the Security Council, another subject that was at the centre of the concerns of the heads of State at the Millennium Summit. In order to ensure the credibility, representativeness, and effectiveness of that leading organ of our Organization, a reform is urgent. When it comes to such a technically complex and politically sensitive question, I would encourage the Secretary-General to tirelessly continue his mediation efforts, as he is doing in many areas, to ensure that the momentum of the search for a solution is not exhausted.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): The annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/55/1) reveals quite clearly and quite impressively the myriad activities in which the United Nations and its bodies have been involved over the past year. The report stresses the following three issues which we believe deserve special attention: the AIDS pandemic, the United Nations role in peacekeeping and the coordinated management of globalization.

Africa has been identified by the United Nations as the continent most deserving of our attention. As the Secretary-General's report has so starkly presented, the AIDS pandemic is destroying the social and economic fabric of entire countries in that continent. It has reversed years of development efforts and has placed an unbearable burden upon States, societies and communities. We welcome and are encouraged by the attention and effort which the United Nations is expending to confront this scourge, and we look forward to the discussion of this issue next week in the General Assembly plenary and in the upcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted exclusively to this horrific crisis. We firmly support the timely adoption of a practical and decisive international plan of action to confront this challenge.

With regard to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the recent report of the Panel on Peace Operations drew special attention to the lack of resources which has plagued those operations and had a

serious impact on their ability to fulfil their goals. It is now clear that effective and predictable financial support is crucial to the success of any peace mission. In this regard, we support initiatives to modify the scale of assessments so as to distribute the financial burdens of these operations more equitably. We will support efforts to introduce a 25 per cent ceiling on individual assessments.

At this time, Israel wishes to inform the General Assembly of its decision to forgo the 80 per cent reduction it had previously enjoyed and to pay its full assessment to the United Nations peacekeeping budget.

Thirdly, the report's discussion of globalization highlights the challenges and opportunities inherent in the current race towards economic integration. The forces of globalization have the power to both enrich and impoverish. A country's openness to integration and free markets can help to alleviate poverty and disease, but it can also serve to increase its vulnerability to the impact of volatile global markets.

Israel firmly supports the Secretary-General's Global Compact initiative, as well as the promotion of "coalitions for change", as a valuable means to harness the productive potential of globalization, to distribute its rewards more evenly and to maximize the ability of national Governments to protect their citizens from the pitfalls of the open market. The Secretary-General's annual report has indeed demonstrated the wide-ranging and comprehensive role played by this Organization around the globe.

From Israel's perspective, this year has been very significant for our relationship with the United Nations. Two events in particular have signalled to Israel, its citizens and its supporters worldwide that the United Nations may indeed have the capacity to relate to Israel as a nation like any other.

First, this year marks Israel's temporary acceptance into the Group of Western European and Other States. Our inclusion in that group will help to rectify an anomaly that has affected no other nation. It is an important step, albeit a first step, towards Israel's full integration into the United Nations. For the principle of sovereign equality as laid down in Article 2 of the Charter to be fully realized, Israel must be accepted in a regional grouping in all United Nations headquarters around the world and must become eligible for the same candidatures as are all other United Nations Members. At the same time, we remain committed to achieving membership among our natural partners in the Asian Group. In lieu of that membership, however, our inclusion in the Group of Western European and Other States will serve to increase our ability to participate as a full and equal Member State. The Secretary-General's efforts in this metamorphosis were, and will continue to be, crucial to its success.

The second event was the unprecedented coordination that existed between the United Nations and Israel with regard to the pullout of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. In full coordination with the United Nations, and in keeping with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), Israel withdrew its forces from southern Lebanon on 24 May 2000. Following the withdrawal, the United Nations worked to confirm Israel's fulfilment of its part of the resolution. On 16 June 2000, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, submitted his report to the Security Council on the implementation of Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). That detailed document reflected hundreds of hours of briefings with Israeli and Lebanese officials, discussions with the national leaders of the two States, inspections on the ground by United Nations officials and an investigation of the line of withdrawal. In his conclusion, the Secretary-General stated unequivocally:

> "I can report to the Security Council that Israel has withdrawn its forces from Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978)". (*S/2000/590, para. 40*)

The Security Council in turn welcomed the report, endorsed its conclusions and cleared the way for the completion of the implementation of its resolution 425 (1978).

It must be recalled that, in addition to calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, Security Council resolution 425 (1978) also calls for the restoration of international peace and security and for the return of the effective authority of the Government of Lebanon in the area. Now that Israel has withdrawn its forces, and now that the United Nations has confirmed its full compliance with Council resolution 425 (1978), we call once again upon the other parties to fulfil their remaining obligations under that resolution so that peace and security may come, at long last, to that area.

Israel hopes that this transitional period in southern Lebanon will open a new chapter of peace and

security along the border and of mutual trust between the people of Israel and the people of Lebanon. It recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General in promoting that goal.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is broad in its outlook and global in its scope. It demonstrates the multi-faceted activities of the United Nations and its bodies over the past year. Yet beyond that, from Israel's perspective, this year of United Nations activity has marked a significant step forward in both our integration into the United Nations system and in the degree of cooperation between us and the Organization. We are satisfied by these developments and, in the spirit of Article 2 of the Charter, look forward in the coming year to beginning a new era of equality in Israel's status in the family of nations.

As the Secretary-General's report has clearly indicated, the resolution of conflicts and the building of peace rank very high among the concerns of the nations of the world. It is of the highest concern to us as well. We in the Middle East stand on the threshold of historic decisions. It is our hope that those decisions will be taken imminently and that they will lead to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for us and for generations to come. May it be God's will that next year's report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization will also include a few paragraphs describing the achievement of lasting peace in the Middle East.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.